Constitution of an Apex Body for managing maritime affairs

319. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times dated 1st November, 2001 captioned "Pant: Wake up to the danger from the sea";

(b) whether it is a fact that Government are not fully appreciating "Maritime Security" in comparison to "land oriented security" because of departmental overlapping of jurisdiction, confusion and inability to respond to fast evolving situation; and

(c) if so, whether Government propose to form an 'Apex Body' to manage maritime affairs including vast new strategic frontiers on the seas?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. The Government is sensitive and appreciative of the requirements of maritime security.

(c) The Group of Ministers has recommended the constitution of an 'Apex Body' for management of maritime affairs including the vast strategic frontiers on the sea. No final decision has yet been taken on the recommendation.

Malpractices in defence canteens and stores

320. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the news-item titled "Rs. 25 lakh misappropriated from naval canteen by staff" appearing in the Hindustan Times dated 7th September, 2001;

(b) whether it is a fact that the sale of a large number of non-CSD items are prevalent in different canteens/stores run by the three different wings; and